



March 7, 2002 (Report on the December 2001 Meeting of the National Leadership Council)

NLCJournal

Director Fran Mainella acknowledged Deputy Director Deny Galvin's retirement, praising his inspirational leadership and stating that the Service is a stronger, more confident organization as a result of his direction. The Director said that Galvin was a highly-effective advocate of the parks, and his legacy is an organization positioned in the new century to make a larger contribution to American society.

The National Leadership Council met in Washington, DC, on December 12 and 13, 2001, to consider key management issues and continue its follow-up to the report of the National Park System Advisory Board. Director Mainella recognized Deputy Director Deny Galvin's retirement (January 3), thanking him for a distinguished career serving America's national parks and advancing the interests of the NPS. She said the NPS today is a more effective, respected, and responsive organization because of Galvin's leadership. [Galvin's successor had not yet been named.] The Director welcomed new NLC member Bill Walters, formerly Pacific West Region deputy director, now serving in WASO as Associate to the Director.

The Director reported on her participation in the recent AK and joint NE/NCR regional conferences, applauding both for involving NPS partners. She reaffirmed her direction that the Service place high priority on expanding partnerships as a means to achieve our mission. She commended the NER for its recent publication "Discovering a Common Agenda," and asked all regions to develop similar relationships with their state park systems.

In speaking about the roles and functions of the two deputy directors, she said the division of duties between them will evolve. Deputy Director Don Murphy will handle political activities, law enforcement, deferred maintenance and construction issues, and his involvement with historic preservation and information technology issues will increase. The other deputy director will manage most day-to-day operational issues requiring Director-level attention, personnel matters and testimony before Congress. Bill Walters will meet regularly with her and the deputies and will be available to answer questions regarding WASO operations and structure.

NPS Workforce Issues

The NLC considered issues and possible actions needed to improve support for employees in their career development. Discussions focused

on the types of training, developmental opportunities and support that are provided for participants in the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SESCDP), the Executive Potential Program, the Team Leadership Program, and the Bevinetto Fellow Program. The NLC observed that the National Park System Advisory Board report created expectations in the organization that a workforce capacity will be developed to tackle challenges it anticipates in the 21st Century. The Director tasked Associate Director Sue Masica and Regional Director Marie Rust to develop recommendations that respond to this issue. As a starting point, they will examine recent reviews, reports, and studies that have looked at the workforce. A separate sub-group of this effort, co-chaired by Regional Director Rob Arnberger and Associate Director Dick Ring, will examine how the NPS manages the development of senior executives who participate in the SESCO.

Veterans Day Weekend Observance

The planning team for the Veterans Day weekend observance reported on outcomes. The Director thanked the team (David Barna, Chief, Office of Communications; Mike Bento, Communications Consultant; Steve Pittleman, NPS Webmaster; Lisa Mendelson-Ielmini, Special Assistant for Partnerships, NCPC; and Peggy O'Dell, Associate Manager for Client Services, HFC) for its success in planning and overseeing this special communications event within such a short time frame. Discussions centered on the ability of the Service to evaluate effectively this kind of communication event. The team had mixed success in securing feedback from parks and regions, and noted the Intranet was useful in delivering communication tools, and the Director's video was helpful in explaining the purpose of the event. Discussions concluded with a decision to develop strategies and tools to take advantage of "lessons learned." The Director said the NPS needs a permanent special event marketing and communication capability which includes a thorough evaluation methodology. Peggy O'Dell and team members were tasked to review options and report back to the NLC.

- National Leadership Council
- Fran Mainella, Director
- Denis (Deny) Galvin, Deputy Director
- Donald W. (Don) Murphy, Deputy Director
- Sue Masica, Associate Director, Administration
- Katherine (Kate) Stevenson, Associate Director, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships
- Michael (Mike) Soukup, Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science
- Richard (Dick) Ring, Associate Director, Park Operations and Education
- Terrel (Terry) Emmons, Associate Director, Professional Services
- Robert L. (Rob) Arnberger, Regional Director, Alaska
- Karen P. Wade, Regional Director, Intermountain
- William (Bill) Schenk, Regional Director, Midwest
- Terry R. Carlstrom, Regional Director, National Capital
- Marie Rust, Regional Director, Northeast
- John J. Reynolds, Regional Director, Pacific West
- Jerry Belson, Regional Director, Southeast

The President's Management Agenda

As follow-up to the October NLC discussion of the President's management agenda, DOI Deputy Assistant Secretary for Performance and Management, Scott Cameron, met with the NLC to review the current focus on management issues across DOI bureaus. The Secretary is committed to a management agenda that includes: competitive sourcing; electronic government; integration of budget and performance management; improved financial performance; and strategic management of human capital. Mr. Cameron discussed OMB's use of a scorecard to grade agency performance in these five management areas. DOI will use a similar approach to grade performance on the part of individual bureaus. All SES personnel will have an element in their annual performance standards that is linked to success in achieving the management goals. Mr. Cameron emphasized his belief that bureau progress on the five management goals will result in improved funding through the budget process. He stressed that competitive sourcing goals are for cost-comparison studies and no pre-determined outcomes have been reached as to whether the government or the private sector will have the most cost-effective proposal. He expressed his hope that OMB will agree that savings resulting from competitive sourcing and expanded use of electronic government will stay with the DOI and the bureaus generating the savings.

Mr. Cameron also discussed the DOI's new approach to charting the strategic directions of its bureaus. In the past, the DOI strategic plan was an umbrella to encompass all of the bureau-specific plans. It appears now that the DOI will develop a plan that is more comprehensive than those of individual bureaus, and the bureaus will be expected to prepare plans that build from it. Tied to this change in direction is an expectation that all bureaus will be shifting to an activity based cost method of accounting, with full implementation across the DOI by FY 2003.

NPS Maintenance Backlog

Deputy Director Don Murphy underscored the continuing priority of the NPS to reduce the maintenance backlog and reviewed progress to date. He reported on discussions with DOI leadership regarding the Service's position that the term "backlog" includes not only deferred facility infrastructure maintenance, but also natural and cultural resources, as well as outdated interpretive displays in visitor centers. He said there is agreement in principle with the Service's position, and the Director and he will work to ensure that the definition is used consistently. He also announced that the Denver Service Center is developing a visual graphic to explain the many steps and complex variables, such as NEPA compliance and funding, involved in completing an infrastructure project.

Wildland Fire Management

The NLC heard from Rick Gale, Deputy Chief Ranger for Fire, Aviation and Emergency Response, on the current status of Federal wildland fire management policy, and considered actions required by the NPS. To the maximum extent possible, parks working on wildland fire management plans in anticipation of the September 2004 deadline should use the interagency fire management planning template, an ecosystem-based fire management tool. Associate Director Ring will draft a directive which: sets forth that WASO Fire Policy and Aviation staff will serve as overall coordinator of the effort, with regions setting priorities; establishes an NPS Fire Management Council, with regional and WASO representation; and addresses issues of funding. The NLC also agreed on the need to implement a prioritized wildland fire social science research plan agenda. At the conclusion of the session, the Director acknowledged Rick Gale's January retirement, and thanked him for contributions to the NPS. The NLC gave Mr. Gale a standing ovation.

General Management Plans and Visitor Facilities

The NLC discussed the recent report of the House and Senate Conference Committee on the FY 2002 NPS appropriation. The report expresses concern about the size and cost of new visitor, heritage, and environmental education centers. It was agreed that the NPS response will address perceptions that many projects are promoted outside of the NPS budget request, and that park managers are inappropriately endorsing these requests. It was also agreed that the NPS should do a better job explaining the origins of some projects, the fact that some projects characterized as visitor facilities actually include basic utilities and park infrastructure, and that partnerships and co-location of facilities may be highly efficient. Other actions that might be taken include: completion of visitor facility planning guidelines now in progress; improving capability statements to reflect more reasonable expectations about cost, schedule and staff requirements for new visitor facilities; and ensuring that the NPS speaks with one voice about how the addition of one project means that a higher NPS priority must be dropped. Associate Director Masica will coordinate the NPS response to the committee's concerns.

Focusing on the Future National Park Service

The NLC continued its evaluation of the National Park System Advisory Board's August 2001 report, "Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century." The report challenges the NPS to play a larger role in American life. Director Mainella endorsed the report's findings and subsequently instructed the NLC to assess its recommendations and develop proposals for possible follow-up action. The NLC discussion focused on three recommendations:

"The Secretary is committed to a management agenda that includes: competitive sourcing; electronic government; integration of budget and performance management; improved financial performance; and strategic management of human capital."

*Deputy Assistant Secretary
Scott Cameron*

Advocate for Conservation and Outdoor Recreation

The report calls on the National Park Service “to serve as a convener and catalyst...build[ing] partnerships...to join in creating a national network of parks, preserves, open spaces, greenways and recreation areas touching all communities and accessible to all Americans.”

The NLC recognizes that an extensive “network” of public and private open spaces and parks already exists in the country. To one extent or another, they share common goals of preserving resources and providing public access—the NPS core mission. These purposes are furthered—and the network is strengthened—through collaborative relationships that extend the reach and increase the capacity of each participating party. These beneficial relationships include: joint planning and research; sharing of information, resources, equipment and staff; joint management; and coordinated, mutually-supporting communications with the public. By engaging in these relationships, Federal, State, local and private sector park and recreation providers can achieve economies of scale and deliver vital services more efficiently and effectively.

An exciting vision embedded in the national network idea is that the nation’s dispersed parks and protected landscapes might be physically *linked*, woven into larger systems of interconnected natural and recreational open spaces. Ed McMahon of the Conservation Fund briefed the NLC on case examples of linking Federal, State, municipal and private lands. McMahon proposed that national parks and other large protected areas could be “hubs” in a national system of connected lands, with greenways, heritage corridors, recreational trails, and wildlife corridors stitching these centerpieces together. He reaffirmed that parks cannot survive as ecological islands, and that by connecting “fragmented” natural areas, the nation can establish biological linkages among habitats, and provide citizens everywhere convenient and uninterrupted recreational access to the natural world. He endorsed the Board’s recommendation that the NPS champion the national network concept, adding that the Service brings important assets of high public respect and credibility to advance the idea.

Director Mainella expressed enthusiasm for creating a seamless park system and charged the NLC task group headed by Regional Director Rust to present at the April 17 and 18 NLC meeting a strategy for action. That discussion will be transcribed and made available to employees as a supplement to the *NLC Journal*.

Inspire Greater Self-Awareness and National Pride

The report urges that the Park Service “become a more significant part of the nation’s educational system....[that] education become a primary mission...with budgets, policies and organizational structures” reflecting this commitment.

National parks are powerful educational resources, and the learning experience that occurs in parks is unique. Educators say students—citizens of all ages—retain content better, gain stronger skills, and more quickly adopt new values when learning is connected to the “classrooms” of historic sites and nature. The NPS has long considered education a necessary part of what it does, and today the Service informs the public through a wide array of education and interpretive programs, signage, electronic media and publications, and it manages a web site that records about a million public visits a day. Across the nation there is widespread, intense interest in improving American education. The NPS has a voice in that discussion.

In its October meeting, the National Leadership Council reviewed the organization’s history in education (see the NPS Chief Historian’s paper on this subject at www.cr.nps.gov/history/npae.htm) and agreed that, before any recommendations were made to Director Mainella regarding future directions, a series of “seminars” would be conducted to better inform the NLC about current education theory and practice. As reported in the last NLC Journal, scholars and experts from outside the NPS will be asked to participate to broaden perspectives and inform about new approaches.

Board member Dr. Shirley Malcom of the American Association for the Advancement of Science joined the December NLC meeting to speak about the Board’s report. She explained that the report gives principal emphasis to education because members felt strongly that the NPS can not achieve its mission without a more comprehensive and focused education program. She said that, through its education programs, the Service broadens and deepens contact with the public and increases awareness of the parks. She urged the NPS to address education more systemically—as an integral function of everything it does. She encouraged stronger connections among programs, offices, and centers with education responsibilities and, specifically, a closer link between scholarship and the delivery of information to the public. She urged that a continuum of educational opportunities be offered, from school age to life-long learning. Knowledge in the sciences and the humanities is constantly evolving and NPS resources are directly affected by that growing body of literature. Dr. Malcom recommended that the Service discover new ways to share this information with the public. She recommended that the NPS expand connections to, and fashion partnerships with, the nation’s formal educational structure, its schools, universities and museums.

“Place-based” education will be the focus of study at the February 20-21 NLC meeting (information from this discussion will be made available as a supplement to the next issue of the

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NPS Advisory Board Report

NLC *Journal*). Future sessions will cover topics such as learning styles, evaluation and assessments, distance learning and educational technology.

Assume a More Active Role in the Stewardship of the Sea

The report urges the Service to develop a more sophisticated knowledge of park resources and their conditions, and recommends a “greatly increased focus on the conservation of natural systems...and adoption of the conservation of biodiversity as a core principle in carrying out the NPS preservation mandate.” The report asserts that marine habitats, fisheries and water quality show dramatic declines in health worldwide and recommends that the Service “pay special attention to the protection and restoration of marine systems.”

Dr. Gary Davis, Senior Scientist at Channel Islands National Park, reported that 60 units of the system contain large and small fragments of the nation’s coastal and marine heritage. He said there is unanimity among scientists that fisheries and coastal management strategies in the 20th Century have largely failed to sustain natural systems along American shores. Davis said marine resources in national parks are rarely managed differently from those in surrounding waters and, as a result, fishing opportunities and the natural systems supporting them in parks are being lost at an alarming rate. With the notable exception of Dry Tortugas National Park, most coastal parks contribute only controls on watershed development and protection of terrestrial wildlife from disturbance.

Dr. Davis suggested the NPS has an opportunity to contribute significantly to national efforts to rebuild depleted fishing stocks, restore lost integrity and resilience to natural systems, and provide opportunities for Americans to fish forever. Solutions will require formal partnerships with shared authorities. The most promising solution is ecosystem-based zoning of use in the sea; designation of reserves—the *same* concept used in creating national parks on land. Dr. Davis said that marine reserves represent the best strategy for rebuilding depleted fishing stocks, restoring productivity to the coastal ocean, and providing examples of nature for recreation, study and inspiration.

Director Mainella expressed support for developing the NPS capacity for coastal conservation. It was suggested the effort should begin with a search for common understanding among the fishing and scientific communities and coastal park managers, similar to the way U.S. Civil War park superintendents recently gathered with scholars, interpreters, park neighbors and enthusiasts. Creating a coalition of coastal protection area managers to share experiences and search for common solutions would help better frame the issues and develop strategies for

improved conservation and recreational opportunities. The Director concluded the session by stating that “fishing forever” is an important goal of NPS stewardship, and instructed Associate Director Mike Soukup to lead a planning effort for a conference of marine park superintendents, academics, partner organizations and fishermen to highlight the success of the Dry Tortugas National Park experience and develop strategies for the future.

NLC Organizational Development

The Director expressed strong support for the NLC commitment to work with an organizational development consultant to strengthen itself as a leadership body. The search committee advised the NLC members on candidates it had interviewed for the position, and said that a recommendation on the final candidate could be brought to the Director within the week. It was agreed that if the individual selected was available in mid-March, 2002 the NLC would arrange a two-day “retreat” in the Seattle area to begin this work.

Other Actions and News

Information Technology Capital Asset Investment. The NPS will establish a decision-making body for IT investments. Comprised of Associate Directors Ring, Stevenson and Masica, Regional Directors Arnberger and Belson, and Associate to the Director Walters, the group will be chaired by Deputy Director Murphy. It will meet twice a year, or more frequently as the need arises, to approve major IT plans and review performance on existing IT initiatives.

National Park Foundation. NPF President Jim Maddy reported on efforts by the Foundation to develop a new mission statement and strategic plan. The NPF will provide grants for the purposes of connecting schools and communities to the parks; create or strengthen community support groups to address individual park priorities; and, in a departure from the past, encourage contributions from individuals, not just corporations.

The TEL Network. The NLC was advised that the NPS training and development program installed 90 Technology Enhanced Learning Stations in parks in 2001. Currently, over 60 percent of NPS employees have access to a TEL station. The 2002 program goal is to reach 90 percent of all FTE. Beyond providing training to the workforce, TEL stations also offer communication mechanisms to management.

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*Dr. Shirley Malcom,
Board Member*
